

Tox-Away Days

Planning for a tox-away day must begin very early - as long as 6 to 18 months before the collection date. The timeline later in this document shows what should be done when. Following are the major subjects that need to be addressed.

1. Define Roles and Responsibilities

Although one person can be the catalyst for a tox-away day, success depends on the involvement of a variety of individuals and organizations. A key initial step is identify who should be involved and defining their roles and responsibilities.

2. Create the Planning Committee

A core group of people should assemble the needed resources and manage the program. The planning committee can perform or oversee many different functions, such as:

- Providing background information
- Setting policy and goals
- Obtaining funding and other resources
- Championing the program in the community
- Supervising a sponsor

The process of forming a planning committee can begin at a meeting of community officials and interested members of the public where they can discuss instituting an overall HHW management program, possibly beginning with a tox-away day. Telephoning influential community members, including the local Chamber of Commerce, and placing announcements in the local media can help boost attendance at the meeting.

If sufficient support for a program exists, the people gathered can choose a program coordinator, form a planning committee and subcommittees, and begin planning the program. The planning committee usually includes:

- Solid waste, health, public safety, and planning officials
- Legislators
- Members of citizen groups
- Representatives from local business and industry

3. Identify the Program Sponsor

Every community HHW management program needs a sponsor or co-sponsors. Usually the sponsor is a government agency, but some programs are sponsored by a civic organization or a business. The sponsor's role includes:

- Managing and funding the program
- Developing RFPs - requests for proposal - and entering contracts with a hazardous waste contractor
- Recruiting, managing, and delegating responsibilities to supporting agencies and staff
- Involving community leaders and residents in planning and implementing the program.

4. Hire the hazardous Waste Contractor

Most communities contract with a hazardous waste firm to receive various kinds of HHW at the collection site; to identify, sort, and pack it by type; and to ship the HHW to disposal facilities. The roles of the contractor are spelled out in the contract (see examples at the tab "Contracts" and may include:

- Providing necessary materials and equipment
- Training Its collection staff
- Obtaining necessary insurance
- Consulting with program planners about waste management methods to be used
- Identifying appropriate HHW storage, treatment, and disposal facilities
- Providing all necessary services on collection day, including but not limited to
 - Unloading waste from vehicles
 - Screening, packaging, testing, and labeling wastes
 - Supervising volunteer personnel
 - Transporting and disposing of waste
- Complying with all applicable federal state, and local requirements
- Submitting post-collection reports

As an example of a comprehensive request for proposal, please refer to the case study of the Allen County program, which appears as another page in this guidance document.

5. Involve the Community

Community involvement is critical to the success of an HHW management program.

Government agencies, community groups, local legislators, businesses, industries, and concerned citizens should be involved from the start. They can promote the HHW program in a number of ways:

Building acceptance for the program. If key community leaders participate in the planning process, they can help build community acceptance and support for the project. In addition, local officials will know the mood and interests of the community and can help avoid or overcome sensitive issues.

Developing a sense of community "ownership". People involved in planning and implementing a project will feel that the program belongs to them. Community ownership helps to ensure greater participation on collection day as well as community pride about the outcome of the event.

Providing community assistance. Volunteer groups and residents often can contribute expertise or resources and can share the responsibilities of planning and implementing the program with the program sponsor.

Providing leadership on HHW issues. The more community leaders learn about managing and reducing HHW the more likely they will be to support an ongoing or permanent program. Many community leaders also will alter their buying and disposal practices, becoming examples for the community.

6. Assemble the Facts

Members of the planning committee should conduct background research during the program's early planning stages. At least a month or two is needed to acquire the information necessary to plan the program and inform the community. This research can be conducted by planning committee members, who can provide important information in their areas of expertise. For example:

Health and fire department officials can provide technical data (such as material safety data sheets) about specific hazardous materials.

Police and safety officials can advise on the selection of sites, provide traffic management procedures, establish safety routines, and manage mishaps.

Legislators and public officials can provide the relevant regulations and guidelines.

Public interest groups also can be involved in site selection, as well as media contacts, production of informational materials, and procedures for volunteer recruitment.

Businesses can help raise funds and find equipment to borrow.

Educators can provide classroom instructional materials.

It is essential that the sponsor and the planning committees learn about regulations that apply to their HHW management program as well as the steps they can take to minimize liability. (See additional pages on Table of Content.)

It is also important to anticipate the types of wastes to be collected, since different types of HHW present different transport and handling requirements. The type of accumulated HHW is strongly influenced by whether the community is in an urban, suburban, rural, or agricultural area. Farm communities, for example, often generate large quantities of pesticides, which are among the most expensive wastes to dispose of. An HHW program in an agricultural or rural area might cost more than one in a suburb or city. And any community that is especially active on environmental Issues will have higher collection and participation rates than less proactive places.

7. Establish Goals

Every HHW management program needs clear, realistic goals and feasible ways of achieving them.

Typical program goals include:

Maximizing public participation. By maximizing participation in the HHW program, the quantity of hazardous materials will be reduced in both the solid waste stream and the wastewater stream.

Greater participation will mean higher costs for the community in the short run but will help avoid or reduce costs associated with potential environmental cleanups. Participation also helps to prevent or minimize health and safety problems associated with Improper HHW storage and handling in homes.

Maximizing the reuse and recycling of HHW. By maximizing reuse and recycling, program sponsors often can minimize their hazardous waste disposal costs in addition to conserving resources. But sometimes, higher costs may be the result. Establishing a program to collect and recycle oil-based paint, for example, could cost more from start to finish than simply processing the material as HHW.

Removing from homes those wastes considered most hazardous. Instead of collecting all wastes, some communities might want to collect specific wastes that they consider to present an unacceptable risk or to be a likely source of environmental contamination, such as used motor oil and oil-based paint. It might be difficult, however, to educate local residents to bring only selected hazardous wastes to a collection.

Educating the public about reducing generation of HHW. Some program sponsors might want to establish an HHW program to provide information to consumers about proper HHW management and alternative ways to reduce generation of HHW. No matter how effective education is, however, collection programs will still be needed for wastes for which there are no alternatives and for existing HHW stored in homes. identifying goals will help collection program organizers to determine:

- The basic type of collection program (periodic drop-off, curbside collection, permanent)
- The amount of funding needed to educate the community about the program and to collect and manage the wastes, and
- The waste management practices that the program will use.

TOX-AWAY DAY TIMELINE

6 to 18 Months Before Collection

- Establish planning committee
- Identify program goals
- Select program sponsor and co-sponsors
- Contact IDEM Office of Solid & Hazardous Waste Management (800-451-6027)
- Begin designing education program
- Initiate community outreach
- Research laws, regulations, and guidelines
- Determine collection methods
- Set tentative collection date
- Select potential sites
- Initiate public education program
- Determine targeted wastes, excluded wastes, main sources of wastes
- Estimate costs
- Secure funding
- Issue requests for proposal (RFPs)

3 to 5 Months Before Collection

- Evaluate RFPs
- Interview contractors
- Select contractor
- Identify markets for reusable and recyclable HHW
- Involve emergency services (fire, police)
- Begin publicizing collection program
- Obtain permits

6 to 12 Weeks Before Collection

- Lay out the site and draw a site plan
- Develop collection day procedures, written plan
- Identify and order equipment
- Arrange for recycling or disposal of non-hazardous material that may be brought in
- Continue education and intensify publicity
- Sign-up volunteers
- Acquire insurance
- Design collection-day surveys

Less Than 6 Weeks Before Collection

- Receive equipment and supplies
- Train volunteers in site procedures and safety
- Complete the publicity campaign
- Confirm support by police and fire departments

Collection Day

- Set up site
- Orient community staff and volunteers
- Complete participant questionnaires

- Receive, package, and ship HHW
- Clean up site

Immediately After Collection Day

- Recognize your volunteers, and thank all participants through the media
- Tabulate quantities and kinds of HHW collected, publicize the results
- Tabulate survey responses, circulate as appropriate
- Write summary report including recommendations concerning the next HHW event

Read This Before You Decide To Hold a Tox-Away Day

Communities that have never held a tox-away day should take the following steps before committing to this particular approach to HHW management:

- 1. Read and become thoroughly familiar with the case study of a tox-away day in Allen County that appears next in this section. Also read the related contract that appears at the tab "Contracts!". Call the Allen County program sponsor to discuss the pros and cons.**
- 2. Consider other options, especially those described at "Permanent Programs!". Call the program sponsors to discuss the pros and cons.**

The time you invest in this cautious, thorough approach will help you to select the most cost-effective way to reduce the level of HHW in the community.